

Tulane cardiologist awarded national leadership honor

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Dr. Keith Ferdinand will receive the 2017 Spirit of the Heart Leadership Award from the Association of Black Cardiologists at an awards ceremony on Oct. 7 in New York City. (Photo by Ryan Rivet.)

The [Association of Black Cardiologists](#) is honoring Tulane University cardiologist Dr. Keith Ferdinand with its 2017 Spirit of the Heart Leadership Award for his lifelong work as a champion of change in advancing health equity and reducing cardiovascular disease disparities.

[Ferdinand](#), a professor of medicine at Tulane University School of Medicine's Heart and Vascular Institute, will be recognized along with [five other trailblazers](#) at the Association of Black Cardiologists' (ABC) eighth annual [Spirit of the Heart Awards Gala](#) in New York City on Oct. 7.

Before joining Tulane, Ferdinand served patients in the Ninth Ward for more than three decades at a clinic he co-founded with his wife, Daphne Ferdinand, RN. The clinic was destroyed following Hurricane Katrina. He has also held leadership positions in several national cardiology associations. He is past chair of the National Forum for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention and has served as chief science officer and past chair of ABC. He has also served as a board member of the American Society of Hypertension, the Southwest Lipid Association and the International Society of Hypertension in Blacks.

Ferdinand is deeply honored and grateful to be recognized by the ABC for serving the community.

"I try to make a difference in medicine both for individual patients and, especially, for my community. I am a child of the Lower Ninth Ward and my personal goal has always been to service the population which nurtured me as a youth," he said. "This award in a way is recognition of my parents, previous teachers, and general community which supported me to become a physician and later hopefully be a positive force for good."

Ferdinand has conducted numerous trials in cardiology, cardiovascular disease and risks factors, especially among patients in racial and ethnic minorities.

"For African-Americans there are disproportionately higher rates of heart disease including heart attacks, strokes, heart failure and end stage renal disease," he said. "As I journeyed into medicine, I did research and started to recognize that these health disparities, specifically in cardiovascular disease, were persistent, prominent and, for me, unacceptable. So my work with multiple organizations was an effort to use the vital tool of medicine to address personally distressing healthcare disparities."

Ferdinand has published research in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, *Journal of Clinical Hypertension*, *American Journal of Cardiovascular Drugs* and other distinguished journals.